

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 155 572

CG 012 693

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TITLE Career Decisions Needs Assessment.
PUB DATE 10 Nov 76
NOTE 21p.; Appendix D is of marginal reproducibility
EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.83 HC-\$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Career Choice; *Decision Making; Evaluation Methods;
*High School Students; *Needs Assessment;
Occupational Aspiration; *Parent Child Relationship;
Questionnaires; Secondary Education; *Vocational
Maturity

ABSTRACT

This document describes one school district's efforts to improve its career development programs at the postsecondary level. The district's Central Planning Team identified several specific objectives for accomplishing this, and developed a sequence of tasks for carrying out the objectives. One of the first and most critical tasks in that sequence was a needs assessment. This paper describes the processes used in conducting the needs assessment, the results of the study, and the implications of the data for the original career development objectives identified by the Central Planning Team. A 16-item questionnaire designed specifically for the study was administered to 205 high school students. Telephone interviews were also conducted with 152 parents of the students who were tested. Both instruments are included in the appendices.
(Author)

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CAREER DECISIONS NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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A Project Initiated

by the

Coordinating and Planning Team

Greece Central School District

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
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Submitted to the Board of Education
Greece Central School District

November 10, 1976

CG 012693

In August of 1976, the Coordinating and Planning Team (CPT) of the Greece Central School District was charged with the responsibility of improving the district's career development programs at the post secondary level. In responding to this challenge, the CPT identified several specific objectives and a sequence of tasks for accomplishing those objectives (see Appendix A.) One of the first and most critical steps in that task sequence was a needs assessment. The purpose of this paper is to describe the processes used in conducting that needs assessment, the results of the study, and the implications of the data for those original career development objectives identified by the CPT.

How the data were collected

A 16 item questionnaire specifically designed for this study was administered to 113 ninth graders and 92 twelfth graders in the Greece Athena High School. Students were primarily asked to judge the quality of the interactions they have had with parents and school concerning their career decisions. They were also questioned regarding their post high school plans. (See Appendix B.)

After the student data had been collected, a corps of volunteer parents were trained to conduct telephone interviews with the parents of each of the students who had been tested. The questions on the parent telephone interview form were parallel to those on the student questionnaire (see Appendix C.) The interview forms were completed on 79 ninth grade parents and 73 twelfth grade parents.

Results and Conclusions

This section contains a summary of the data which were collected during the needs assessment. The summary will be broken down into a series of discrete conclusions which have the most direct implications for school programs. Most of the conclusions are based directly on the data summaries contained in Appendix D. Several statements rely partially on cross tabulation analyses which can be obtained from the Greece Central School District Administration Office.

Parental influence on career decisions

**Ninth and twelfth grade parents and students show little agreement on how much time they spend discussing career decisions, how informed parents are in leading those discussions, and how useful the discussions are for the student.

*Parents estimate that they spend an average of 13 hours per year discussing post high school plans with the student. Students estimate spending an average of only three hours per year.

*Parents and students do not agree on the amount of influence their conversations have on students career decisions. Most parents tend to overestimate the amount of influence they are having. For example, 30% of the parents of twelfth graders feel they have a lot of influence, while only 12% of the students agree.

*Thirty-two percent of the parents of twelfth graders rate themselves as being very well informed when talking about career decisions, while only 22% of their children agree that the parents are well informed. In contrast, ninth grade students rate their parents as being more well informed than the parents' actual ratings of themselves. The students' perceptions of how well informed their parents are, is also related to the amount of time spent in career related conversations. In other words, students who perceive their parents as being well informed are more likely to seek their parent's guidance concerning career decisions.

*Most parents and students feel that significant parental influence is appropriate in making career decisions. It should be noted that 18% of both parents and students feel that parents should be having more influence than they are currently having.

**Parents and students vary in their predictions of the students' plans following graduation from high school.

*Twelfth graders and their parents show significant agreement ($r = .54$) with each other when asked to predict the students' plans following high school (work, further school.) But parents who do not agree with students are more likely to predict further schooling than are the students. (80% of the parents predicted further schooling, 64% of the students predicted further schooling.)

*There is significant disagreement between ninth graders and their parents as to the student's plans following graduation from high school. Approximately one third of the parents and students respond differently when asked whether the student would "work" or seek "further schooling" following graduation.

*Ninth graders are more definite in their post high school plans than their parents perceive them to be. Twelfth graders are less definite than their parents perceive them to be (see question #7, Appendix D.)

School influence on career decisions

**Most parents and students (73%) say that the school has had little or no influence on students' career decisions and that it should have more influence.

*More than half of the ninth graders' parents (57%) cannot name a single resource provided by the school or community for aiding parents in discussing career decisions with students. Most twelfth grade

parents (715) can name at least one resource. Most students (69%) can name at least two.

*Most parents (51%) say they would definitely be willing to participate in a career decisions program if it were offered. An additional 28% say that they would probably be willing to participate.

*Most parents (80%) say they have never participated in a district sponsored program on career development. Most ninth grade students also say they have never participated. Twelfth graders report a broader participation (37%).

*Of those who have participated, most parents (83%) find the programs to be either, "somewhat or very helpful." Most students (67%) find the programs to be either "somewhat or not very helpful."

Recommendations

In this section, broad recommendations will be offered to the district for meeting the needs established in this assessment. It should be noted that the recommendations are made with the following constraints in mind:

- 1) projected fiscal reductions
 - 2) no increase in personnel
 - 3) limited parental time
 - 4) variable student/parent relationships
1. The responsibility for career development should be defined more carefully. A significant portion of this definition would include the education of both parents and school personnel concerning the shared stewardship and unique abilities and opportunities of each in helping students to make effective and wise career decisions. It is appropriate for the school because of resources, experience and position to take the lead in this task of role definition. It will be critical, however, to maintain appropriate community and parental involvement at all stages of this process. As roles are defined and programs designed, it will be important to broaden the efforts of educating an increasing number of parents in the district about present and future programs and alternatives, costs, rationale, and intended results.
 2. Parents need more career information if they are to increase their effectiveness in helping their children make career decisions. The district should institute a program that would be aimed at improving parental knowledge and personal interaction skills. This program should result in more planned interaction between parent and student.
 3. The district should make more parents aware of programs that now exist which are designed to help them with career guidance.

4. Consideration should be given to new and more effective ways of utilizing human resources within the district to meet the career development needs of students. With a limited number of counselors available within each school, questions like the following should be posed:
- A. What can teachers do in the area of career guidance that counselors are now doing?
 - B. Are there areas in which student peers could assist?
 - C. Are there roles for aides (paid and volunteer) that have not yet been identified (i.e. are there certain essential but routine tasks which could be handled by these people thus freeing more of the counselor's time?)

In this paper we have described the conditions that prompted a needs assessment, and the processes used in gathering the data. Special emphasis has been placed on the results of the study and the implications of those results for the future directions the school district might pursue. The need for the school-district to take the lead in designing programs in career development for both parents and students has clearly been established. While the specific procedures and techniques for such programs have not yet been identified, valuable insights have emerged from the data which provide an important foundation upon which effective programs might later be built.

Appendix A

**A Proposal to Involve Parents,
Students, and the School
in the
Career Decision Making
Process**

A PROPOSAL TO INVOLVE STUDENTS, PARENTS, AND
THE SCHOOL IN THE CAREER DECISION MAKING PROCESS

A PROPOSAL TO INVOLVE STUDENTS, PARENTS, AND
THE SCHOOL IN THE CAREER DECISION MAKING PROCESS

The approach being proposed by the CPT subcommittee on counseling is an effort to be responsive to a school's and community's mutual interest in involving students, parents and the school in the career decision making process. The objectives listed as Stage I objectives are considered to be minimal objectives. Attachment I is an outline of the tasks which the subcommittee feels need to be accomplished if these objectives are to be met. Attachment 2 specifies the costs associated with two different options. Attachment 3 contains the assumptions. It is intended that the objective identified as the Stage II objective will be addressed through a project to be developed at a later date.

STAGE I OBJECTIVES: To ensure that by no later than January, 1978, a program will be ready for implementation which will allow students and their parents to increase:

1. The amount of their personal interaction concerning career options for students.
2. Their understanding of the relationship between today's educational decisions and tomorrow's career options.
3. Their knowledge of school and community resources available which can facilitate a sound career decision making process.

STAGE II OBJECTIVE: To insure that an effective career advising system which utilizes existing resources is implemented throughout the district by no later than September, 1978. This system is to be interactive among students, parents and the school.

TASK ANALYSIS

TASK	PERSON(S)	DEADLINE
1. Plan and Task Analysis	C/PT Sub Committee	August 16, 1976
2. Approval of C/PT Committee	C/PT Committee	August 30
3. Needs justification and content specification (including information needed by Students/Parents/School)	CEAC Boosters Developer Project Director	October 31
4. Availability of existing procedures for meeting needs	Project Director	
5. Produce the design document for program which will include delivery system, strategies and evaluation scheme	Project Director Developer User(s)	December 15
6. Approval to develop the pilot program	Board of Education Teachers Association C/PT	December 21
7. Develop program including instructional materials and evaluation instruments	Project Director Developer	
8. Development of Trainer's guide	Project Director Developer	
9. Conduct Training (training of users)	Project Director	Jan. 1-31, 77
10. Pilot	To be determined	Feb.-April, 77
11. Produce final report including recommended revisions	Project Director Developer C/PT Sub-Committee	TOTAL
12. Review with C/PT Board of Education, Teachers Association	Project Director Developer C/PT Sub-Committee	Fall.
13. Revise as needed	Project Director Developer C/PT Sub-Committee	
14. Approval for implementation	Board of Education	January, 1978

Appendix B
Career Decisions Questionnaire
(students)

CAREER DECISIONS QUESTIONNAIRE

NAME _____ GRADE _____

DATE _____

The results of this questionnaire will be used to help the school district plan programs in career development.

Directions

Read through each question and circle the best answer. If you don't feel that any of the choices describes your situation, circle the answer that comes closest and then write an explanation below your response. If you are not sure about the meaning of one of the questions, ask the examiner.

1. Estimate the number of hours you have spent in the last year talking with your parents about career goals.
a) none b) 1-2 c) 3-5 d) 6-10 e) 11-15 f) 16 or more
2. Who usually starts the conversation?
a) you b) your Mom c) your Dad
3. Would you describe these conversations as:
a) spontaneous b) planned
- for instance, does it come up around the dinner table (spontaneous) or is it planned in advance (planned)?
4. How well informed do you think your parents feel in talking with you about career decisions?
a) very well informed
b) somewhat well informed
c) Not very well informed
5. How useful would you say these conversations are in helping you make career decisions?
a) very useful b) somewhat useful c) not very useful

6. Have you decided what you are going to do following graduation from high school?

a) No If "No," skip to question #11. b) Yes

7. If "Yes," how definite is your decision?

a) Very definite b) Somewhat definite c) Not very definite

8. When did you make this decision?

a) This year c) 3-4 years ago
b) 1-2 years ago d) 5 or more years ago

9. What do you plan to do following graduation from high school? (Circle either "a" or "b")

a) Work full time _____ b) Further schooling _____

Have you decided what kind
of work? No _____ Yes _____

Have you chosen a specific
career? No _____ Yes _____

Please specify _____

Please specify _____

10. Why did you decide to do that?

11. How much influence has the school (counselors and teachers) had on your career decisions?

a) none b) a little bit c) some d) a lot

12. Would you say that the amount of influence the school has had on your career decisions has been:

a) not enough b) about right c) too much

13. How much influence would you say that your parents have had on your career decisions?
- a) none b) a little bit c) some d) a lot
14. Would you say that the amount of influence your parents have had on your career decision has been:
- a) not enough b) about right c) too much
15. How many resources can you name that exist in the community and school district to help you in making career decisions?

16. Have you tried any of the programs provided by the district and community for career development?

a) Yes _____ b) No _____

How helpful were these programs?

a) Very helpful b) Somewhat helpful c) Not very helpful

Explain:

Appendix C
Telephone Interview Form
(parents)

3. How much influence has the school (counselors, teachers) had on _____'s career decision?

- a) none b) a little bit c) some d) a lot

FU 1) Would you say that the amount of influence the school has had has been

- a) not enough b) about right c) too much

FU 2) Would you be interested in participating if the school were to provide programs for aiding parents in career counseling?

- a) Yes b) Maybe c) No

4. How much influence would you say that you (as parents) have had on _____'s career decision?

- a) none b) a little bit c) some d) a lot

FU 1) Would you say that the amount of influence you have had has been -

- a) not enough b) about right c) too much

5. Are you aware of any resources that exist in the community and school district to aid you and your child in making his/her career decisions? _____

FU 1) Can you name any of them?

6. Have you participated in any of the programs provided by the district and community for career development? _____

FU 1) How helpful did you find them for you and _____.

- a) very helpful b) somewhat helpful c) not very helpful

FU 2) Could you explain why?

TELEPHONE INTERVIEW FORM

Parent Interviewed _____ Mother _____ Father _____

Student _____ Date _____

Interviewer _____ Total Interview Time _____

INTRODUCTION

My name is _____ and I'm calling from Greece Central School District. We are doing some research on the career development of our students and would like to ask you a few questions about _____.

1. How often do you talk with _____ about what he/she will do after graduating from high school?

FU 1) Could you estimate how many hours per (week), (month), (year)? _____

FU 2) Who usually starts the conversation? _____

FU 3) Would you describe most of these conversations as:

spontaneous _____ or planned _____

for instance, does it come up around the dinner table, or is it something you plan in advance? _____

FU 4) How well informed do you feel in talking with _____ about career decisions?

a) Very well informed

b) Somewhat well informed

c) Not very well informed

FU 5) How useful would you say these conversations are in helping _____ make career decisions?

a) very useful b) somewhat useful c) not very useful

2. What does _____ plan to do following graduation from high school? _____

FU 1) How definite is his/her decision?

a) very definite b) somewhat definite c) not very definite

FU 2) When did he/she make that decision? _____

FU 3) Why did he/she make that decision? _____

3. How much influence has the school (counselors, teachers) had on _____'s career decision?

- a) none b) a little bit c) some d) a lot

FU 1) Would you say that the amount of influence the school has had has been

- a) not enough b) about right c) too much

FU 2) Would you be interested in participating if the school were to provide programs for aiding parents in career counseling?

- a) Yes b) Maybe c) No

4. How much influence would you say that you (as parents) have had on _____'s career decision?

- a) none b) a little bit c) some d) a lot

FU 1) Would you say that the amount of influence you have had has been -

- a) not enough b) about right c) too much

5. Are you aware of any resources that exist in the community and school district to aid you and your child in making his/her career decisions? _____

FU 1) Can you name any of them?

6. Have you participated in any of the programs provided by the district and community for career development? _____

FU 1) How helpful did you find them for you and _____.

- a) very helpful b) somewhat helpful c) not very helpful

FU 2) Could you explain why?

Appendix D
Data Summary

PARENT					CORRELATION COEFFICIENT	STUDENT					
1. How often do you talk with _____ about what s(he) will do after graduating from high school?						1. Estimate the number of hours you have spent in the last year talking with your parents about career goals.					
PU 1) Could you estimate how many hours per (week), (month), (year)?											
a) none b) 1-5 c) 6-10 d) 11-15 e) 16 or more						a) none b) 1-5 c) 6-10 d) 11-15 e) 16 or more					
9th	1.3	31.6	17.1	14.5	35.5	.15	5.3	66.3	17.7	2.7	8.0
12th	0.0	9.7	9.7	12.5	68.1	.16	1.1	70.6	12.0	8.7	7.6
2. Who usually starts the conversation?						2. Who usually starts the conversation?					
a) student b) Mom c) Dad Both						a) you b) your Mom c) your Dad Both					
9th	44.4	20.4	13.0	22.2	*	67.3	18.7	14.0			
12th	30.6	22.4	12.2	34.7	*	46.7	27.8	23.3		2.9	
3. Would you describe these conversations as:						3. Would you describe these conversations as:					
a) spontaneous b) planned						a) spontaneous b) planned					
- for instance, does it come up around the dinner table (spontaneous) or is it planned in advance?						- for instance, does it come up around the dinner table (spontaneous) or is it planned in advance?					
9th	96.1		3.9		.25	92.5		7.5			
12th	97.0		3.0		**	83.1		13.5		3.4	
4. How well informed do you feel in talking with _____ about career decisions?						4. How well informed do you think your parents feel in talking with you about career decisions?					
a) very well b) somewhat well informed c) not very well						a) very well b) somewhat well informed c) not very well					
9th	38.7	32.0		29.3	.03	28.6	60.7		10.7		
12th	31.9	48.6		19.4	.14	21.7	52.2		26.1		
5. How useful would you say these conversations are in helping _____ make career decisions?						5. How useful would you say these conversations are in helping _____ make career decisions?					
a) very useful b) somewhat useful c) not very useful						a) very useful b) somewhat useful c) not very useful					
9th	37.7	46.4		15.9	.02	32.1	58.0		9.8		
12th	47.9	41.1		11.0	.27	15.2	59.8		2		
6. Have you decided what you are going to do following graduation from high school?						6. Have you decided what you are going to do following graduation from high school?					
						a) No b) Yes					
						24.3 73.8					
						11.6 82.6					
7. How definite is his/her decision?						7. If yes, how definite is your decision?					
a) very definite b) somewhat definite c) not very definite						a) very definite b) somewhat definite c) not very definite					
9th	36.9	27.7		35.4	.02	26.8	63.4		9.8		
12th	50.0	37.9		12.1	.31	38.7	55.0		6.3		
8. When did s(he) make that decision?						8. When did you make this decision?					
a) this year b) 1-2 yrs ago c) 3-4 yrs ago d) 5+ yrs ago						a) this year b) 1-2 yrs ago c) 3-4 yrs ago d) 5+ yrs ago					
9th	20.4	44.9	16.3	18.3	*	26.5	60.2	12.2		1.2	
12th	29.5	41.0	19.7	9.8	*	28.2	47.4	16.7		7.7	
9. What does _____ plan to do following graduation from high school?						9. What do you plan to do following graduation from high school?					
a) work b) further schooling						a) work b) further schooling					
9th	21.8	78.2			.12	29.3	70.7				
12th	20.0	80.0			.54	34.2	65.5				

20

10. How much influence has the school (counselors, teachers) had on _____'s career decision?

a) none b) a little bit c) some d) a lot

9th	56.2	16.4	19.2	8.2
12th	35.7	20.3	27.1	12.9

11. Would you say that the amount of influence the school has had has been

a) not enough b) about right c) too much

9th	59.1	40.9	0.0
12th	41.8	58.2	0.0

FU 1) Would you be interested in participating if the school were to provide programs for aiding parents in career counselling?

a) yes b) maybe c) no

9th	55.8	26.0	18.2
12th	44.9	30.4	24.6

12. How much influence would you say that you (as parents) have had on _____'s career decisions?

a) none b) a little bit c) some d) a lot

9th	20.0	18.7	25.2	32.0
12th	5.8	27.5	36.2	30.4

10. How much influence has the school (counselors, teachers) had on your career decisions?

a) none b) a little bit c) some d) a lot

.03	50.0	27.4	19.8	2.8
.33	45.3	25.6	19.8	9.3

11. Would you say that the amount of influence the school has had on your career decisions has been

a) not enough b) about right c) too much

.12	61.3	36.9	.9
.05	57.0	40.7	2.3

12. How much influence would you say that your parents have had on your career decisions?

a) none b) a little bit c) some d) a lot

.04	6.4	30.3	35.8	27.5
.09	10.9	29.7	47.8	12.0

13. Would you say that the amount of influence you have had has been:

a) not enough b) about right c) too much

9th	18.8	79.7	1.4
12th	17.6	82.4	0.0

13. Would you say that the amount of influence your parents have had on your career decision has been:

a) not enough b) about right c) too much

.23	22.9	71.1	0.0
.00	11.0	82.4	6.6

14. Are you aware of any resources that exist in the community and school district to aid you and your child in making his/her career decision?

Can you name any of them?

(0) (1) (2) (3) (4)

9th	57.0	21.5	20.3	1.3	0.0
12th	28.6	39.3	23.2	5.4	3.6

14. How many resources can you name that exist in the community and school district to help you in making career decisions?

(0) (1) (2) (3) (4)

.14	7.7	28.8	36.3	25.0	1.9
.09	3.4	20.7	48.3	19.0	8.6

15. Have you participated in any of the programs provided by the district and community for career development?

Yes No

9th	14.5	85.5
12th	16.7	83.3

15. Have you tried any of the programs provided by the district and community for career development?

Yes No

*	13.5	86.5
*	36.4	63.6

16. How helpful did you find them for you and _____.

a) very helpful b) somewhat helpful c) not very helpful

9th	25.0	58.3	16.7
12th	36.4	45.5	18.2

16. How helpful were these programs?

a) very helpful b) somewhat helpful c) not very helpful

*	17.1	40.0	42.9
*	20.8	47.9	31.3

* Not calculated

** Not calculable (see frequency counts)